UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
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Date: September 26, 2016

Subject: Pollution Report – Initial/Final
Tatooine Industries Abandoned Mercury Site
Burns/Laramie/Wyoming

To: Site File

From: Joyce Ackerman, OSC
8EPR-ER

ABSTRACT

Site #:	A8N7	Response Authority:	CERCLA
NPL Status:	non-NPL	Response Type:	Classic Emergency
Action Memo Date:	7/21/2016	Removal Mob. Date:	6/30/2016
Removal Completion Date: 9/26/2016			

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Site Evaluation

The U.S. EPA RCRA/CERCLA Technical Enforcement Program has been working with the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (WY DEQ) regarding the Tatooine Industries recycling facility. The owner of the facility received a variety of wastes when it was operational including but not limited to electronic wastes such as computers and televisions, used oil, and elemental mercury. The facility is essentially abandoned, with a variety of wastes remaining inside two buildings and outdoors. The EPA Removal Program was requested to provide assistance in assessing the wastes at the Site for a possible removal action.

In discussions with the WY DEQ as well as photo documentation from previous State and EPA inspections, OSC Joyce Ackerman learned that several containers of elemental mercury and mercury-containing devices were being stored in three refrigerators at the Site. There were broken windows at the Site, indicating possible trespassers. The doors of the two buildings were locked, but there were no security features such as fences or alarms. Due to the quantities of elemental mercury being stored and the evidence of trespassing, the OSC determined that an emergency response was necessary to remove the mercury from the facility.

OSC Ackerman was assisted by OSC Shun-Ping Chau who mobilized to the facility on June 30, 2016, with a representative from the WY DEQ, and EPA's Superfund Technical Assessment and Response Team (START) and Emergency and Rapid Response Services (ERRS) contractors. The ERRS contractor collected the containers of elemental mercury, mercury-containing devices, and one of the refrigerators, and arranged for proper disposal.

1.2 Threat Determination

The contaminant of concern at the Site is elemental mercury. Mercury is a hazardous substance as defined by Section 101(14) of CERCLA. For elemental mercury, the most important route of absorption is through inhalation. Mercury vapors are colorless and odorless. According to the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) 1999 Toxicological Profile for Mercury, the major target organs of elemental mercury-induced toxicity are the kidneys and the central nervous system. The toxicological profile also states metallic mercury and its vapors are extremely difficult to remove from clothes, furniture, carpet, floors, walls, and other such items. If these items are not properly cleaned, the mercury can remain for months or years and continue to be a source of exposure.

The containers of mercury and devices were located inside a building in three refrigerators. Power has been turned off to the building. While the door to the building is locked, there are broken windows suggesting trespassers have accessed the Site in the past. There are no fences, alarms, or other security measures to prevent access to the Site.

2. Current Activities

2.1 Removal Action

The ERRS contractor collected the containers of mercury, mercury-containing devices, and one of the refrigerators that had elevated mercury vapors inside. Disposal was completed in early September 2016 at the Clean Harbors facility in Kimball, Nebraska.

2.2 Costs

The ERRS contractor ceiling for the project is $7,000 and the START contractor ceiling is $4,000.